



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, June 8th, 2009

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***Medical Marijuana Update
Permanent Ordinance and Hardship Exemptions***

WHAT: A press conference will be held to discuss the recommendations that will be considered on Tuesday, June 9th in City Council and the Planning & Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee. The Council Agenda includes hearings to deny or approve 14 existing Hardship Exemptions and a motion to remove Hardship Exemptions from the current Interim Control Ordinance, set to expire September 14th. The PLUM Committee will discuss the policy guidelines to draft a permanent medical marijuana ordinance.

WHEN: Tuesday, June 9th, 9:30am

WHERE: Third Floor Media Room (Behind City Hall Council Chambers)
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

WHO: Councilman Dennis P. Zine
Councilman Ed Reyes
Councilman Jose Huizar
Councilwoman Janice Hahn
Councilman Eric Garcetti

WHY: The City is pursuing multiple avenues to deal with the proliferation of medical marijuana dispensaries throughout Los Angeles. The first is to develop a permanent ordinance that establishes guidelines for the operation of a dispensary; another is to hear the hardship exemption applications that were filed after the moratorium was enacted; and the Council will consider removing the hardship exemption provision from the existing Interim Control Ordinance.

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FACT SHEET

Council to Consider Stricter Rules for Medicinal Marijuana Dispensaries

Permanent Ordinance:

- Councilman Zine presented a motion on May 3, 2005 to explore the regulation of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries in the City of Los Angeles.
- On September 22, 2006 Councilman Zine introduced another motion asking for a moratorium on dispensaries until regulations could be established.
- Today, the Planning & Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee will discuss the policy guidelines to draft a permanent medical marijuana ordinance. These regulations will be focused on securing access to medical marijuana to qualified patients and primary caregivers while protecting surrounding areas from potential negative impact. This would include: operational guidelines, proliferation and over-concentration, proximity of dispensaries to sensitive uses, and appropriate permitting and licensing.
- The various City Departments will use these guidelines to draft a permanent ordinance that will be presented to PLUM which will then make a recommendation to the entire City Council. The goal is to adopt a permanent ordinance before the Interim Control Ordinance expires on September 14, 2009.

Hardship Exemption Hearings:

- Hundreds of medical marijuana dispensaries are believed to be operating in violation of the moratorium because they did not register with the City by the deadline established in 2007.
- 186 dispensaries registered by the City deadline. These dispensaries are currently operating within the law. Over 500 dispensaries filed hardship applications after the moratorium was enacted and many of these have opened and operated illegally while waiting for a determination.
- Today, the City Council will hear 14 of those Hardship Exemption cases. It is incumbent upon the applicant to show that a hardship exists. A granting of a hardship exemption will allow a dispensary to operate. A denial of a hardship exemption will not allow a dispensary to operate. If a dispensary's hardship exemption is denied and it is in operation, the City can move to shut it down.

Striking Hardship Exemptions from Interim Control Ordinance:

- Councilman Huizar introduced a motion to strike the Hardship Exemption provision from the current Interim Control Ordinance, set to expire September 14th. By removing the hardship exemption provision, the City can more quickly shut down any future dispensaries that violate the ICO.
- Today, the Council will vote on Huizar's motion to direct the City Attorney to take the appropriate steps to remove this provision.

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